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MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
March 11, 1862.

To the Speaker of the
House of Representatives:

I transmit, herewith, copies of such official reports as have been received at the War Department, of the defence and fall of Fort Donelson. They will be found incomplete and unsatisfactory. Instructions have been given to furnish further information upon the several points not made intelligible by the reports. It is not stated that reinforcements were at any time asked for; nor is it demonstrated to have been impossible to have saved the army by evacuating the position; nor is it known by what means it was found practicable to withdraw a part of the garrison, leaving the remainder to surrender; nor upon what authority or principle of action the senior Generals abandoned responsibility, by transferring the command to a junior officer.

In a former communication to Congress, I presented the propriety of a suspension of judgment in relation to the disaster at Fort Donelson, until official reports could be received. I regret that the information now furnished is so defective. In the meantime, hopeful that satisfactory explanation may be made, I have directed, upon the exhibition of the case as presented by the two senior Generals, that they should be relieved from command to await further orders whenever a reliable judgment can be rendered on the merits of the case.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

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LETTER FROM SECRETARY OF WAR.

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA, WAR DEP'T,
Richmond, March 11th, 1862.

SIR: I have the honor to enclose, herewith, the reports made by Brigadier-General Floyd and Brigadier-General Pillow of the surrender of Fort Donelson. No statement is made by either General of the mode of his own escape, nor can the exact circumstances which accompanied the surrender be officially known till Brigadier-General Buckner, now a prisoner, is enabled to make his report.

I submit the whole for transmission to Congress, or such other action as you may deem proper.

I am, your obedient servant,

J. P. BENJAMIN,
Secretary of War.

TO THE PRESIDENT.

REPORT OF GID. J. PILLOW,

BRIGADIER-GENERAL OF THE C. S. A.

Columbia, Tennessee,
February 18th, 1862.

Captain Clarence Derrick,

Assistant Adjutant General:

On the 9th instant General A S. Johnston ordered me to proceed to Fort Donelson and take command at that post. On the 10th instant I arrived at that place. In detailing the operations of the forces under my command at Fort Donelson, it is proper to state the condition of that work, and of the forces constituting its garrison. When I arrived I found the work on the river battery unfinished, and wholly too weak to resist the force of heavy artillery. I found a ten-inch columbiad and thirty-two pounder rifled gun had not been mounted. Deep gloom was hanging over the command, and the troops greatly depressed and demoralized by the circumstances attending the surrender of Fort Henry, and the manner of retiring from that place.

My first attention was given to the necessity of strengthening this work and mounting the two heavy guns, and to the construction of defensive works to protect the rear of the river battery. I imparted to the work all the energy which it was possible to do, working day and night with the whole command.

The battery was without a competent number of artillerists, and those that were there were not well instructed in the use of their guns. To provide for this want, I placed the artillery companies under active course of instruction in the use of their guns. I detailed Captain Ross, with his company of light artillerists, to the command of one of the river batteries. These heavy guns being mounted and provision being made for working them, and a proper supply of ammunition having been procured by my orders from Nashville, I felt myself prepared to test the effect of the

fire of heavy metal against the enemy's gunboats, though the work stood much in need of more heavy pieces. The armament of the batteries consisted of eight thirty-two (32) pounders, three thirty-two (32) pound cannonades, one eight (8) columbiad, and one rifle thirty-two (32) calibre.

The selection of the site for the work was an unfortunate one. While its command of the river was favorable, the site was commanded by the heights above and below on the river, and by a continuous range of hills all around the works to its rear.

A field work of very contracted dimensions had been constructed for the garrison, to protect the battery, but this field work was commanded by the hills already referred to, and lay open to a fire of artillery from every direction except from the hills below.

To guard against the effects of the fire of artillery from these heights, a line of defensive works, consisting of rifle pits and abattis for infantry, detached on our right, but continuous on our left, with defences for our light artillery, were laid off by Major Gilmer, Engineer of General A. S. Johnston's Staff, but on duty with me at the post, around the rear of the battery and on the heights, from which artillery could reach our battery and inner field work, enveloping the inner work and town of Dover, where our principal supplies of Commissary and Quartermaster stores were in depot. These works, pushed with the utmost possible energy, were not quite completed, nor my troops all in position, though nearly so, when Brigadier-General Floyd, my senior officer, reached that station.

The works were laid off with judgment and skill, by Major Gilmer, were well executed and designed for the defence of the rear of work, the only objection being to the length of the line, which, however, from the surroundings, was unavoidable. The length of the line, and the inadequacy of the force for its defence, were a source of embarrassment throughout the struggle which subsequently ensued, in the defence of the position.

I had placed Brigadier-General Buckner in command of the right wing, and Brigadier-General Johnson in command of the left.

By extraordinary efforts, we had barely got these works in defensible condition, when the enemy made an advance in force around and against the entire line of out-works.

The first assault was commenced by the enemy's artillery, against the centre of our left wing, which was promptly responded to by Capt. Green's battery of field artillery. After several hours of fire between the artillery of the two armies, the enemy's infantry advanced to the conflict all along the line, which was kept up and increased in volume, from one end of the line to the other, for several hours, when, at last, the enemy made a vigorous assault against the right of our left wing, the position assaulted being a height commanded by Col. Heiman, and defended by his brigade, consisting of the Tenth (10th) Tennessee, under command of Lieut. Col. McGarock, Col. Voorhies, Colonel Hughes, and Col. Head's regiments Tennessee Volunteers, and defended by Capt. Maney's field battery.

This assault was vigorously made, and the position as vigorously defended, and resulted in the repulse of the enemy here and everywhere around the line. The result of the day's work pretty well tested the strength of our defensive line, and established, beyond question, the gallantry of the entire command, all of which fought well their portion of the line. The loss sustained by our forces in this engagement was not large, our men being mostly under shelter in the rifle pits, but we, nevertheless, had quite a number killed and wounded; but, owing to the continued fighting which followed, it was impossible to get any official report of the casualties of the day. On the same day, our battery on the river was engaged with one of the enemy's gunboats, which occasioned quite a lively cannonading for more than an hour, in which the gallant Capt. Dixon, of the Engineer Corps, was killed instantly at the battery. This officer had been on duty for some months at the post, and had shown great energy and professional skill, and by his gallant bearing on that day, while directing the operations under my orders, had justly won for himself high distinction. His death was a serious loss to the service, and was a source of no little embarrassment in our after operations. On the twelfth (12th) we had quiet, but we saw the smoke of a large number of gunboats and steamboats a short distance below. We also received reliable information of the arrival of a large number of new troops, greatly increasing the strength of the enemy's forces, already said to be from twenty to thirty thousand strong.

On the thirteenth (13) these reinforcements were seen advancing to their position in the line of investment, and while this was being done, six of the enemy's iron-cased gunboats were seen advancing up the river, five of which were abreast and in line of battle, and the sixth some distance to the rear. When these gunboats arrived within a mile and a half of our battery, they opened fire on the battery. My orders to the officers, Captain Shuster, and Capt. Standeruitzs, who commanded the lower battery of eight guns, and Capt. Ross, the upper battery of four guns, were to hold their fire, until the enemy's boats should come within point blank range of their guns.

This they did, though the ordeal of holding their fire, while the enemy's shot and shell fell thick around their position, was a severe restraint upon their patriotic impulses, but, nevertheless, our batteries made no response till the gunboats got within range of their guns. Our entire line of batteries then opened fire. The guns of both parties were well-served, the enemy constantly advancing, delivering direct fire against our batteries, from his line of five gunboats, while the sixth boat, moving up in the rear of the line, kept the air filled with shells, which fell thick and close around the position of our batteries. The fight continued, the enemy steadily advancing slowly up the river, the shot and shell from fifteen heavy rifle guns tearing our parapets, and plunging deep into the earth around and over the batteries, for nearly two hours, and until his boats had reached within the distance of one hundred and fifty (150) yards of our batteries. Having come in such close conflict, I could distinctly see the effect of our shot upon his iron-cased boats. We had given two or three well-directed shots from the heavy guns to one of his boats, when she instantly shrunk back and drifted helpless below the line; several shot struck another boat, tearing her iron case and splintering her timbers, and making them crack as if by a stroke of lightning, when she, too, fell back. Then a third boat received several severe shocks, making her metal ring and her timbers crack, when the whole line gave way and fell rapidly back from our fire, until they passed out of range. Thus ended the first severe and close conflict of our heavy guns with the enemy's gunboats, testing their strength and the power of our heavy guns to resist them.

The shot from our (32) thirty-two pound guns produced but little effect. They struck and rebounded apparently doing but little damage; but I am satisfied, from close observation, that the timbers of the frame-work did not and could not withstand the shock of the ten (10) inch columbiad or thirty-two pound (32) rifle guns. These gunboats never renewed the attack. I learn from citizens, living on the river below, that one of the injured boats sunk, and that others had to be towed to Cairo. This information may or may not be true, but it is certain that all of the boats were repulsed and driven back, after a most vigorous and determined attack, and that two of the boats were badly damaged, and that a third was more or less injured. It is difficult to over-estimate the gallant bearing and heroic conduct of the officers and men of our batteries, who so well and so persistently fought our guns, until the enemy's determined advance brought his boats and guns into such close, desperate conflict. Where all did their duty so well, it is almost impossible to discriminate. The Captains already named and their Lieutenants (whose names for want of the official reports I cannot give) all deserve the highest commendation.

Lieutenant George S. Martin, whose company is at Columbus, Ky., (but who was ordered to that post by Major-General Polk) commanded one of the guns, particularly attracted my attention by his energy and the judgment with which he fought his gun. The wadding having given out, he pulled off his coat and rammed it down his gun, as wadding, and thus kept up the fire until the enemy were finally repulsed. On the evening of this day we received information of the arrival of additional reinforcements of infantry, cavalry and light artillery by steamboat, all of which were disembarked a short distance below our position.

THE BATTLE OF DOVER.

On the fourteenth (14th) instant, the enemy was busy throwing his forces of every arm around us, extending his line of investment entirely around our position and completely enveloping us. On the evening of this day we ascertained that the enemy had received by steamboats additional reinforcements.

We were now surrounded by an immence force said by prisoners whom we had taken, to amount to fifty-two (52) regiments, and every road and possible avenue of departure

cut off, with the certainty that our sources of supply by the river would soon be cut off by the enemy's batteries, placed upon the river above us.

At a meeting of general officers, called by Gen. Floyd, it was determined unanimously to give the enemy battle next day at daylight, so as to cut open a route of exit, and thus to save our army. We had knowledge that the principal portion of the enemy's forces were massed in encampment in front of the extreme left of our position, commanding the two roads in the interior, one of which we must take in retiring from our position. We knew he had massed in encampment another large force on the Winn's Ferry road, opposite the centre of our left wing, while still another was massed nearly in front of the left of our right wing. His fresh arrival of troops being encamped on the bank of the river two and a half (2 1-2) miles below us, from which latter encampment a stream of fresh troops were continually pouring around us on his line of investment, and strengthening his general encampment on the extreme right. At each of his encampments and on each road he had in position a battery of field artillery, and twenty-four (24) pound iron guns, on siege carriages. Between each of these encampments on the roads was a thick undergrowth of brush and black jack, making it impossible to advance or manœuvre any considerable body of troops.

The plan of attack agreed upon and directed by General Floyd to be executed was: that with the main body of the forces, defending our left wing, I should attack the right wing of the enemy occupying and resting on the heights reaching to the bank of the river, accompanied by Col. Forest's Brigade; that Brigadier-General Buckner, with the forces under his command, and defending the right of our line, should strike the enemy's encampment and forces on the Winn's Ferry road; that the forces under Col. Heiman should hold his position, and that each command should leave in the trenches troops to hold the trenches.

In this order of battle it was easy to be seen that if my attack was successful and the enemy routed, that his retreat would be along his line of investment, toward the Winn's Ferry encampment, and thence towards his reserve at the gunboats below. In other words, my success would roll the enemy's force in retreat over upon Gen. Buckner, when, by his attack in flank and rear, we could cut up the enemy and put him completely to rout. Accordingly dispositions

were made to attack the enemy at five o'clock, A. M., of the fifteenth (15th). I moved out of my position to engage the enemy. The enemy was prepared to receive me in advance of his encampment; and he did meet me before I had assumed a line of battle, and while I was moving against him without any formation for the engagement.

For the first half hour of the engagement I was much embarrassed in getting the command in position properly to engage the foe. Having extricated myself from the position and fairly engaged the enemy, we fought him for nearly two hours before I made any decided advance upon him. He contested the field most stubbornly. The loss of both armies on this portion of the field was heavy. The enemy's particularly so, as I discovered by riding over the field after the battle. The enemy having been forced to yield, retired slowly toward the Winn's Ferry road, Buckner's point of attack. He did not retreat, but fell back fighting us, and contesting every inch of ground.

The fight was hotly and stubbornly contested on both sides, and consumed the day till 12 o'clock, to drive the enemy as far back as the centre, where Gen. Buckner's command was to flank him. While my command was advancing and slowly driving him, I was anxiously expecting to hear Gen. Buckner's command open fire in his rear, which, not taking place, I was apprehensive of some misapprehension of orders, and came from the field of battle within the work to learn what was the matter. I there found the command of Gen. Buckner massed behind the hill within the work, taking shelter from the enemy's artillery on the Winn's Ferry road, it having been forced to retire before that battery, as I learned from him. My force was still advancing, driving the enemy towards the battery. I directed Gen. Buckner immediately to move his command round the rear of the battery, turning its left, keeping in the hollow, and attack and carry it.

Before the movement was executed, my forces, forming the attacking party on the right, with Colonel Forest's regiment of cavalry, had reached the position of the battery. Colonel Forest's cavalry gallantly charged a large body of infantry supporting the battery, driving it and forcing the battery to retire, taking six pieces of artillery, four brass, and two twenty-four (24) pound iron guns. In pursuing the enemy falling back from this position, General Buckner's forces became united with mine and engaged the

enemy in a hot contest, of nearly an hour, with large forces of fresh troops, that had now met us. This position of the enemy being carried by our joint forces, I called off farther pursuit after seven-and-a-half hours of continuous and bloody conflict. After the troops were called off from the pursuit, orders were immediately given to the different commands to form and retire to their original positions in the trenches.

The operations of the day had forced the entire command of the enemy around to our right wing, and in front of General Buckner's position in the entrenchment, and when he reached his position, I found the enemy rapidly advancing to take possession of his portion of our work. He had a stubborn conflict, lasting one hour and a half, to regain his position, and the enemy actually got possession of the extreme right of his position, and held it so firmly that he could not dislodge him. The position thus gained by the enemy was a most important and commanding one, being immediately in rear of our river batteries and field work for its protection. From it he could readily turn the entrenched work occupied by General Buckner, and attack him in reverse, or he could advance, under cover of an intervening ridge, directly upon our battery and field-work. While the enemy held the position, it was manifest we could not hold the main work or battery. Such was the condition of the two armies at night-fall, after nine hours of conflict on the fifteenth instant, in which our loss was severe, and leaving not less than one thousand (1,000) of the enemy dead upon the field. We left upon the field nearly all of his wounded, because we could not remove them. We left his dead unburied, because we could not bury them. Such conflict and carnage has, perhaps, never before occurred upon this continent. We took about three hundred prisoners and a large number of arms.

We had fought this battle to open the way for our army and relieve us from an investment which would necessarily reduce us, and the position we occupied, by famine.

We had accomplished our object, but it occupied the whole day, and before we could prepare to leave, after taking in the wounded and dead, the enemy had thrown around us again, in the night, an immense force of fresh troops, and re-occupied his original position in the line of investment, thus again cutting off our retreat. We had only about thirteen (13,000) thousand troops, all told. Of these we

had lost in three battles a large proportion. The command had been in the trenches night and day for five days exposed to the snow, sleet, mud and ice water, without shelter and without adequate covering, and without sleep.

In this condition the general officers held a consultation to determine what we should do. General Buckner gave it as his decided opinion that he could not hold his position half an hour against an assault of the enemy, and said he was satisfied that the enemy would attack him next morning at day-light. The proposition was then made by the undersigned to again fight our way through the enemy's line, and cut our way out. General Buckner said his command was so worn out and cut to pieces, and demoralized, that he could not make another fight; that it would cost the command three-fourths its present numbers to cut its way out, and it was wrong to sacrifice three-fourths to save one-fourth; that no officer had a right to cause such a sacrifice.

General Floyd and Major Gilmer I understood to concur in this opinion.

I then expressed the opinion that we could hold out another day, and in that time we could get steamboats and set the command over the river, and probably save a large portion of it. To this General Buckner replied, "that the enemy would certainly attack him in the morning, and that he could not hold his position half an hour." The alternative of these propositions was a surrender of the position and command. General Floyd said he would not surrender the command, nor would he surrender himself a prisoner. I had taken the same position. General Buckner said he was satisfied nothing else could be done, and that, therefore, he would surrender the command, if placed in command. General Floyd said he would turn over the command to him, if he could be allowed to withdraw his command. To this General Buckner consented. Thereupon the command was turned over to me, I passing it instantly to General Buckner, saying: "I would neither surrender the command nor myself." I directed Colonel Forest to cut his way out. Under these circumstances General Buckner accepted the command, and sent a flag of truce to the enemy for an armistice of six hours to negotiate for terms of capitulation. Before this flag and communication was delivered, I retired from the garrison.

Before closing my report of the operations of the army at Donelson, I must, in justice to the officers and command

under my immediate command, say that harder fighting or more gallant conduct in officers and men I have never witnessed. In the absence of official reports of brigade and regimental commands, (of which I am deprived by the circumstances detailed in this report,) I may not be able to do justice to the different corps. I will say, however, that the forces under my immediate command during this action bore themselves most gallantly throughout the long and bloody conflict.

I speak with especial commendation of the brigades commanded by Colonels Baldwin, Wharton, McCausland, Simonton and Drake, and of Captains Maney and Green, who fought their guns under the constant and annoying fire of the enemy's sharp-shooters, and of the concentrated fire from his field batteries, from which both commands suffered severely.

Captain Maney was himself wounded, and had several lieutenants killed and many of his company killed and wounded; so did Captains Porter and Graves. If I should hereafter receive the reports of regimental and brigade commands, giving me detailed information of the conduct and bearing of officers and men, I will make a supplemental report.

The absence of official reports deprives me of the means of giving lists of the killed and wounded of the different commands.

I am satisfied that in such a series of conflicts our loss was heavy. I know the enemy's was, from passing over the battle-field in the evening immediately after the battle with General Floyd. His loss in killed and wounded was terrible, exceeding anything I have ever seen upon a battle-field. Our total force on the field did not exceed ten (10,000) thousand men, while, from what I saw of the enemy's force, and from information derived from many prisoners of the enemy, we are sure he had thirty or forty thousand (30 or 40,000) on the field. I must acknowledge my obligations to Major Gilmer, Engineer, for the special and valuable services rendered me in laying off these works, and the energy displayed by him in directing their construction, and for his counsel and advice. I likewise acknowledge my obligations to Captain Gustavus A. Heing, my Assistant Adjutant General, to Colonel John C. Burch, my Aid-de-Camp, to Major Field, to Lieutenant Nicholson, to Lieutenant Charles F. Martin and Colonel Brandon, my volunteer Aids-de-Camp; to Major

Hays, my Assistant Commissary, and Major Jones, my Assistant Quartermaster, for the prompt manner in which they executed my orders, under trying circumstances, throughout the long and continued conflicts, and to Major Gilmer, who accompanied me to the field and was with me throughout the entire day. Also to Captain Parker, of my staff, whom I assigned to command of Captain Ross's field battery, with new recruits as gunners, after Captain Maney's battery was disabled, and who fought and served them well. The conduct of these officers, coming under my immediate attention and observation, met my hearty approval and commendation. Colonel Brandon was severely wounded early in the action. Colonel Baldwin's Brigade constituted the front of the attacking force, sustained immediately by Colonel Wharton's Brigade. These two Brigades deserve especial commendation for the manner in which they sustained the first shock of battle, and, under circumstances of great embarrassment, threw themselves into position and followed up the conflict throughout the day.

Being mostly with these two brigades, I can speak from personal knowledge of the gallant bearing of their commanders. I must also acknowledge my obligations to Brigadier-General Johnson, who assisted me in the command of the forces with which I attacked the enemy, and who bore himself gallantly throughout the conflict; but having received no official report from him, I cannot give the detailed operations of his command.

I have pleasure in being able to say that Col. Forrest, whose command greatly distinguished its commander as a bold and judicious commander, and reflected distinguished honor upon itself, passed safely through the enemy's line of investment, and trust it will yet win other honors in defence of our rights and just cause of country.

(Signed) GID. J. PILLOW,
Brigadier-General C. S. A.

Official: JNO. WITHERS,
A. A. General.

A. & I. G. O., *March* 10, 1862.

REPORT OF JOHN B. FLOYD,

BRIGADIER-GENERAL OF THE C. S. A.

CAMP NEAR MURFREESBORO', February 27th, 1862.

Gen. A. S. JOHNSTON:

SIR: Your order of the 12th of this month, transmitted to me from Bowling Green, by telegraph to Cumberland city, reached me the same evening. It directed me to repair at once, with what force I could command, to the support of the garrison at "Fort Donelson." I immediately prepared for my departure, and effected it in time to reach "Fort Donelson," the next morning, 13th, before daylight. Measures had been already taken by Brigadier-General Pillow, then in command, to render our resistance to the attack of the enemy as effective as possible. He had with activity and industry pushed forward the defensive works towards completion. These defences consisted in an earthwork in "Fort Donelson," in which were mounted guns of different calibres, to the number of thirteen. A field work intended for the infantry supports, and constructed immediately behind the battery, and upon the the summit of the hill in rear. Sweeping away from this field work eastward, to the extent of nearly two miles in its windings, was a line of entrenchments defended on the outside at some points with abattis. These entrenchments were occupied by the troops already there, and by the addition of those which came upon the field with me. The position of the Fort, which was established by the Tennessee authorities, was by no means commanding, nor was the least military significance attached to the position. The entrenchments, afterwards hastily made in many places, were injudiciously constructed because of the distance they were placed from the brow of the hill, subjecting the men to a heavy fire from the enemy's sharp shooters opposite, as they advanced to or retired from the entrenchments. Soon

after my arrival the entrenchments were fully occupied from one end to the other, and just as the sun rose the cannonade from one of the enemy's gunboats announced the opening of the conflict, which was destined to continue for three days and nights. In a very short time the fire became general along our whole lines, and the enemy, who had already planted batteries at several points around the whole circuit of our entrenchments, as shown by a diagram herewith sent, opened a general and active fire from all arms upon our trenches, which continued until darkness put an end to the conflict. They charged with uncommon spirit at several points along on the line, but most particularly at a point undefended by entrenchments, down a hollow, which separated the right wing, under the command of Brigadier-General Buckner, from the right of the centre commanded by Col. Heiman. This charge was prosecuted with uncommon vigor, but was met with a determined spirit of resistance, a cool, deliberate courage both by the troops of Brigadier-General Buckner and Col. Heiman, which drove the enemy, discomfited and cut to pieces, back upon the position he had assumed in the morning. Too high praise cannot be bestowed upon the battery of Captain Porter, for their participation in the rout of the enemy in this assault. My position was immediately in front of the point of attack, and I was thus enabled to witness more distinctly the incidents of it.

The enemy continued their fire upon different parts of our entrenchments throughout the night, which deprived our men of any opportunity to sleep. We lay that night upon our arms, in the trenches. We confidently expected, at the dawn of day, a more vigorous attack than ever; but in this we were entirely mistaken. The day advanced, and no preparations seemed to be making for a general onset; but an extremely annoying fire was kept up from the enemy's sharp-shooters, throughout the whole length of the entrenchments, from their long-range rifles. Whilst this mode of attack was not attended with any considerable loss, it, nevertheless, confined the men to their trenches, and prevented their taking their usual rest.

So stood the affairs of the field until about three o'clock P. M., when the fleet of gunboats, in full force, advanced upon the Fort and opened fire. They advanced in the shape of a crescent, and kept up a constant and incessant fire for one hour and a half, which was replied to with uncommon

spirit and vigor by the Fort. Once the boats reached a point within a few hundred yards of the Fort, at which time it was that three of their boats sustained serious injuries from our batteries, and were compelled to fall back. The line was broken, and the enemy discomfited on the water, giving up the fight entirely, which he never afterwards renewed. I was satisfied, from the incidents of the last two days, that the enemy did not intend again to give us battle in our trenches. They had been fairly repulsed, with very heavy slaughter, upon every effort to storm our position; and it was but fair to infer that they would not again renew the unavailing attempt at our dislodgment, when certain means to effect the same end, without loss, were perfectly at their command. We were aware of the fact that extremely heavy reinforcements had been continually arriving, day and night, for three days and nights; and I had no doubt, whatever, that their whole available force on the western waters could, and would, be concentrated here, if it was deemed necessary to reduce our position. I had already seen the impossibility of holding out, for any length of time, with our inadequate number and indefensible position. There was no place within our entrenchments but could be reached by the enemy's artillery, from their boats or their batteries. It was but fair to infer that, whilst they kept up a sufficient fire upon our entrenchments to keep our men from sleep and prevent repose, their object was merely to give time to pass a column above us on the river, both on the right and the left banks, and thus to cut off all our communications and to prevent the possibility of egress. I thus saw clearly that but one course was left by which a rational hope could be entertained of saving the garrison, or a part of it. That was, to dislodge the enemy from his position on our left, and thus to pass our people into the open country lying southward, towards Nashville. I called for a consultation of the officers of Divisions and Brigades, to take place after dark, when this plan was laid before them, approved and adopted, and at which it was determined to move from the trenches at an early hour on the next morning, and attack the enemy in his position. It was agreed that the attack should commence upon our extreme left, and this duty was assigned Brigadier-General Pillow, assisted by Brigadier-General Johnson, having also under his command, commanders of brigades, Col. Baldwin, commanding Mississippi and Tennessee troops, and Col. Wharton and Col. McCaus-

land, commanding Virginians. To Brigadier-General Buckner was assigned the duty of making the attack, from near the centre of our lines, upon the enemy's forces upon the Winn's Ferry road. The attack on the left was delayed longer than I expected, and, consequently, the enemy was found in position when our troops advanced. The attack, however, on our part, was extremely spirited, and although the resistance of the enemy was obstinate, and their numbers far exceeded ours, our people succeeded in driving them, discomfited and terribly cut to pieces, from the entire left. The Kentucky troops, under Brigadier-General Buckner, advanced from their position behind the entrenchments, upon the Winn's Ferry road, but not until the enemy had been driven, in a great measure, from the position he occupied in the morning.

I had ordered on the night before for the two regiments stationed in Fort Donelson to occupy the trenches vacated by Brigadier-General Buckner's forces, which, together with the men whom he detached to assist in this purpose, I thought sufficient to hold them. My intention was to hold, with Brigadier-General Buckner's command, the Winn's Ferry Road, and thus to prevent the enemy, during the night, from occupying the position on our left which he occupied in the morning. I gave him orders upon the field to that effect. Leaving him in position then, I started for the right of our command to see that all was secure there; my intention being, if things could be held in the condition they then were, to move the whole army, if posible, to the open country lying southward beyond the Randolph Forges. During my absence, and from some misapprehension, I presume, of the previous order given, Brigadier-General Pillow ordered Brigadier-General Buckner to leave his position on the Winn's Ferry Road and to resume his place in his trenches on the right. This movement was nearly executed before I was aware of it. As the enemy was pressing upon the trenches, I deemed that the execution of this last order was all that was left to be done. The enemy in part succeeded in occupying an angle of the trenches on the extreme right of Brigadier-General Buckner's command, and as the fresh forces of the enemy had begun already to move towards our left to occupy the position they held in the morning, and as we had no force adequate to oppose their progress, we had to submit to the mortification of seeing the ground which we had won by such a severe conflict in the morning

re-occupied by the enemy before midnight. The enemy had been landing reinforcements throughout the day. His numbers had been augmented to 83 regiments. Our troops were completely exhausted by four days and nights of continued conflict. To renew it with any hope of successful result was obviously vain, and such I understood to be the unanimous opinion of all the officers present at the council called to consider what was best to be done. I thought, and so announced, that a desperate onset upon the right of the enemy's forces on the ground, where we had attacked them in the morning, might result in the extricating of a considerable proportion of the command from the position we were in, and this opinion I understood to be concurred in by all who were present. But it was likewise agreed, with the same unanimity, that it would result in the slaughter of nearly all who did not succeed in effecting their escape. The question then arose, whether in point of humanity, and a sound military policy, a course should be adopted from which the probabilities were that the larger proportion of the command would be cut to pieces in an unavailing fight against overwhelming numbers. I understood the general sentiment to be adverse to the proposition. I felt that in this contingency, whilst it might be questioned whether I should, as commander of the army, lead it to certain destruction in an unavailing fight, yet I had a right individually to determine that I would not survive a surrender there. To ratify both propositions, I agreed to hand over the command to Brigadier-General Buckner through Brigadier-General Pillow, and to make an effort for my own extrication by any and every means that might present themselves to me.

I therefore directed Col. Forest, a daring and determined officer, at the head of an efficient regiment of cavalry, to be present, for the purpose of accompanying me in what I supposed would be an effort to pass through the enemy's line. I announced the fact upon turning the command over to Brigadier-General Buckner, that I would bring away with me, by any means I could command, my own particular brigade, the propriety of which was acquiesced in on all hands. This, by various modes, I succeeded in accomplishing to a great extent, and would have brought off my whole command, in one way or another, if I had had the assistance of the field officers, who were absent from several of the regiments. The command was turned over to Brigadier-General Buckner, who at once opened negotiations with the enemy, which

resulted in the surrender of the place. Thus ended the conflict running through *four days* and *four nights*; a large portion of which time it was maintained with the greatest fierceness and obstinacy; in which we, with a force not exceeding 13,000, a large portion of whom were illy armed, succeeded in resisting and driving back, with discomfiture, an army consisting of more than 50,000 men. I have no means of accurately estimating the loss of the enemy. From what I saw upon the *battle field*, from what I witnessed throughout the whole period of the conflict, from what I was able to learn from sources of information deemed by me worthy of credit, I have no doubt that the enemy's loss in killed and wounded reached a number beyond (5,000) *five thousand.* Our own losses were extremely heavy; but for want of exact returns I am unable to state precise numbers. I think they will not be far from 1500 killed and wounded. Nothing could exceed the coolness and determined spirit of resistance, which animated the men in this long and perilous conflict, nothing could exceed the determined courage which characterized them throughout this terrible struggle, and nothing could be more admirable than the steadiness which they exhibited until *nature* itself was exhausted, in what they knew to be a desperate fight against a foe very many times their superior in numbers. I cannot particularize in this report to you the numberless instances of heroic daring, performed by both officers and men, but must content myself for the present, by saying, in my judgment they all deserve well of the country.

I have the honor to be,
Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,

(Signed) JOHN B. FLOYD,
Brig. Gen. Commanding.

(Official) JOHN WITHERS,
A. A. General.

A. & I. G. O., March 10, 1862.

REPORT OF G. C. WHARTON,

COLONEL COMMANDING FIRST BRIGADE.

HEADQUARTERS FIRST BRIGADE, FLOYD'S DIVISION,
Camp near Murfreesboro', Tenn., Feb. 22, 1862.

Brigadier-General John B. Floyd:

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following report of the participation of this brigade in the engagement at Fort Donelson.

The advance of the brigade, the fifty-first Regiment Virginia volunteers, reached Dover, one mile from the Fort, about 11, P. M., on Friday, the 7th, and immediately reported to Brigadier-General B. R. Johnson, who was then in command, and was ordered to encamp near the wharf. About 4, P. M., on the 8th, the fifty-sixth Regiment Virginia volunteers arrived, and was ordered to encamp near the fifty-first. From Saturday to Wednesday following there was skirmishing between our cavalry pickets and the enemy. On Wednesday our pickets were driven in, and the enemy reported advancing in force. The brigade was then ordered to take position on the left of Brigadier-General Buckner's division, and near the centre of our line of defence. Soon after taking position the enemy commenced to throw shot and shell, which did no execution. Captain Porter's battery was then ordered to take the position which had been assigned to this brigade, and we were ordered to the support of the left wing, commanded by Brigadier-General Johnson. We were engaged during the evening and night in constructing breastworks and rifle pits. During Thursday we were under a heavy fire from the enemy's batteries; there were also frequent engagements with the infantry, in all of which the enemy were repulsed. Thursday night we remained again in the ditches. On Friday there was skirmishing with the infantry and sharp shooters. Occasionally sharp firing from the batteries. On Friday evening occurred the terrific cannonading between the gunboats and the Fort, some of the shells from the boats exploding in and near our lines, but did no injury. On Saturday morning, at four, A. M., the brigade was withdrawn from the ditches and placed in line, by order of Brigadier-General Pillow, to make an attack on the enemy's extreme

right flank. Col. Baldwin's Brigade was placed in advance. This brigade followed next. About six o'clock the column was put in motion. We had scarcely passed beyond the line of our defence, when the skirmishers of Col. Baldwin's Brigade engaged the enemy's pickets; in a few minutes the engagement became general. We were then ordered to deploy and advance, which was done with spirit and promptness. The enemy, after a very obstinate resistance, was forced to retire, but were either rallied or reinforced on the several ridges, from which they were again and again driven. Our men, cheering as they charged, pursued them nearly two miles, when orders were received that we should retire to our entrenchments. The brigade was very much exhausted, having been under fire or in the ditches for more than four days. The loss of the 51st was nine killed, forty-three wounded, and five missing; of the 56th eight were killed, thirty-seven wounded, and one hundred and fifteen missing. Lieut. Col. J. W. Massie commanded the 51st regiment; his bearing was most chivalric and gallant. Capt. G. W. Davis gallantly led the 56th regiment. Lieut. August Forsberg, attached to the brigade as engineer officer, rendered very efficient service in rallying and leading the men, and throughout the day distinguished himself for gallantry and acts of daring. To mention the many individual instances of heroism and daring, would too much lengthen this report, therefore, suffice it to say, that all the officers and men of both regiments behaved with commendable coolness and bravery.

Capt. S. H. Newberry, Lieuts. Henderson and Painter, of the 51st, were wounded; Capt. D. C. Harrison, of the 56th, was mortally wounded whilst leading his men to a charge. Lieuts. Ferguson and Haskins were also wounded. A number of improved arms were captured and brought to camp.

On Sunday morning the 16th, the brigade was ordered from Fort Donelson to Nashville, where valuable service was rendered in guarding and shipping government stores. Thursday, the 20th, the brigade was ordered to this place, where we are now in camp.

Respectfully submitted,

(Signed.) G. C. WHARTON,
Colonel Commanding Brigade.

Official: JOHN WITHERS,
A. A. General.

A. & I. G. O., *March* 8, 1862.

REPORT OF JOHN McCAUSLAND,

COMMANDING THE SECOND BRIGADE.

HEADQUARTERS 2D BRIGADE, FLOYD'S DIVISION,
Murfreesboro', Tenn., Feb. 23, 1862.

Brigadier-General John B. Floyd :

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following report of the action of this brigade on the 13th, 14th and 15th of February, 1862, in the engagement near Fort Donelson, between the C. S. forces, and the U. S. forces, under General Grant:

On the morning of the 13th, I received your orders to proceed at once from Cumberland city to Fort Donelson, where we arrived at daylight, and were at once ordered to the trenches. This brigade was posted as a support to Green's battery on the left wing. During the entire day the enemy kept up an incessant fire of shot and shell upon the battery and its support. The men and officers behaved well under the circumstances, and soon became accustomed to the firing. There were five men wounded during the day. On the 14th there was continued skirmishing with artillery and musketry. About 2 o'clock, P. M., the gunboats commenced a heavy bombardment of the Fort, the shells passing over and taking the line of works in reverse, and many passing over and through this brigade; however, we suffered no loss, and gathered several large shells (64's I think). About dark another battery was posted in front of our position, and during the night it was placed behind a good earthwork, thrown up by the men. About midnight I received orders to concentrate my brigade near the left wing, which was done promptly; and at daylight of the morning of the 15th, the column under Gen. Pillow sallied from the left, and engaged the enemy in a short space of time.

This brigade was a reserve for Col. Baldwin's Brigade, but the enemy pressing his right, I at once moved up to his

support, and engaged the enemy, posted in thick undergrowth and a rough and rolling country. I ordered the firing to commence as soon as the enemy was in sight; they were advancing just in front of the 36th Virginia Regiment. They, in a short time, were checked, and then I ordered a charge upon them. The men came up with a shout and charged the enemy, routed him and pursued him for two miles, when we were called back by orders of General Pillow.

The 36th Virginia Regiment had 14 killed and 46 wounded, the 50th Virginia Regiment had 10 killed and 40 wounded. On Sunday morning this brigade was forced across the river, and are now arriving at this camp. Lieut. Col. Reid was wounded about the close of the action; he and Major Smith behaved gallantly during the day. In fact men and officers all behaved well. We captured one field gun and two hundred Enfield muskets.

I am, sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,

(Signed.) JOHN McCAUSLAND,
Commanding Second Brigade.

Official: JOHN WITHERS,
A. A. General.

A. & I. G. O., *March* 8, 1862.

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